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Commonweal

Christianity and Oriental Cultures

by Christopher Dawson

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

THE PRESIDENT'S talks to the nation continue to provoke anxiety as much as they offer reassurance. In his second address on the state of our national security, Mr. Eisenhower said a number of good things, as he can be expected to do always, but as in his first talk, he left too many things unsaid, and failed again to explain what his general statements might mean in specific, practical application.

We have already expressed the conviction that our lag in the field of intercontinental missiles calls for a massive, comprehensive national effort, a profound change in attitude by the government and people of the United States. At the same time, the urgency of the military danger, present and future, may beguile us into an unthinking commitment to armaments as our sole salvation.

America's effort to meet the challenge of *sputnik* and the manifest superiority of Russian missiles and rockets will cost "a very considerable figure," said the President, and "the first thing is to search for other places to cut expenditures." Perhaps, but is this an automatic conclusion? The prolonged struggle over our present budget ended in the adoption of a government spending program far below our national needs, according to the President himself, in just about every area—defense, mutual security, education, health and welfare, and more. Are these needs, essential to our national well-being only a few months ago, now so easily dismissed?

In presenting the United States with the choice usually described as "guns or butter," the President raised more questions than he answered. It is strange that he did not urge the possibility of a rise in tax rates, unpleasant as it may be to consider this thought, or some kind of deficit financing of our new scientific efforts.

And the choice of "guns or butter" is in itself not nearly so simple as it sounds. Obviously the country must have and will have guns, in the form of accelerated research, rockets and missiles. But what does the President classify as "butter"? He gave no clue beyond a reference to the Federal Government's "civilian activities," and "cutting out or deferring entire categories of activities." He noted that this would cause "pressure groups" to "wail in anguish."

It is not comforting that the President left it entirely up to Congress to decide which government activities are essential and which are not. He left a similar decision in Congressional hands last spring when he invited Congressmen to remove from his budget anything they thought expendable. It will be recalled that the Congressional economizers very nearly wrecked his entire administrative program.

DO SUBSIDIES for industrial and business groups count as non-essential "civilian activity"? And tax write-offs and special depletion allowances? We are afraid that the anguished pressure groups may turn out to be, not the N.A.M. and the oil lobby, but those who plead for school children, the aged, the sick and the poor. We are afraid that the categories of civilian activity to be cut out or deferred may turn out to be those already shamefully neglected—education, housing, health and welfare.

If sacrifices must be made to insure America's survival, and that of the free world, then none of us will hold back. But let there be equality of sacrifice. The ordinary citizen, the poor and the weak, have no choice but to accept the sacrifices thrust upon them. But let it be so for all. In World War II, it can be remembered, some American

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businessmen declined to sacrifice any profits for the sake of the war effort and "went on strike" for lucrative cost-plus government contracts. In the face of the national emergency that confronts us now, we must see to it that there is no repetition of such inequality of sacrifice.

There is great danger in the "guns or butter" concept. The distinction we must make is between the necessary and that which is over and above the truly necessary—a terribly difficult choice. But the term "guns or butter" suggests an easy division into military and non-military. Surely our national health, our security, in the widest sense, our very identity as a nation, necessitate something more than "hardware." The free world is girding itself against the Communist threat because Communism would destroy the way of life we believe in—a way of life built on reverence for the human person, on freedom and brotherhood, on the belief that the state is for man and not man for the state.

In the present crisis, these ideas must be counted as our "guns," at least as much as missiles and nuclear warheads. We may be willing to transform the nation into a "garrison state" in order to save our lives, but there is no point in such an effort if by it we lose our respect for the very things we are fighting to safeguard. We need to work up to the Soviet level in military might, but to do this we need not sink to a Soviet level in the way we order our domestic affairs, in the priorities we give to human values.

AN ACCOUNT OF AMERICAN CATHOLICS

FOR ITS issue of November 12, *Look* magazine printed as the second in its series, "The Story of Religion in America," an article on Roman Catholics. The article, written by Hartzell Spence, who is not a Catholic, has many things to recommend it to all readers, and only a few minor things with which an informed Catholic would necessarily disagree.

It is a difficult task to summarize without real distortion the growth and influence of Catholicism in America, but Mr. Spence has done so with seeming ease. Not only does he offer interesting facts which most people do not know or have forgotten, but from them he is able to draw meaningful generalizations.

Much of this story is encapsuled in Mr. Spence's statement that "from the creation of this nation, the Catholic Church has been one of the whipping boys of American life. There have been dormant periods in the antagonism toward Catholics in America, but there has never been peace." It cannot truthfully be said that we now live in one of the dormant periods, and the article lists some of the main causes of the tensions that now exist between Catholics and other Americans.

For many of these problems there is no easy solution. They will be debated and discussed for years to come. But Mr. Spence says, quite accurately, that the "largest problem now facing the Church in America is an internal one: what to do about . . . the Catholic's withdrawal into his own parallel society." This is a problem with which each Catholic must be concerned, about which each Catholic can do some part. Only when most Catholics respond to this problem can they expect the majority of other Americans to express the sympathy and understanding displayed in this article.

POST-MORTEM ON LITTLE ROCK

ALTHOUGH the newspapers are not paying too much attention to Little Rock these days, four recent items deserve to be noted. First of all, the forces of moderation defeated the segregationists in the recent election in Little Rock. Secondly, on November 15th, paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division were withdrawn from Central High School for the first time since their arrival on September 24th. Thirdly, J. N. Heiskell, editor and president of the Little Rock *Gazette,* told a session of the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association that if it had not been for the "political action" of Governor Faubus in calling out the National Guard in the first place, "no more than two or three policemen" would have been needed when the high school was integrated. And, lastly, Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas recently declared in New Orleans that he would not rule out the possibility of becoming a Presidential candidate on a third-party ticket. Putting these four items together, we would say that the weight of the evidence remains on the side of Mr. Heiskell.

WORKERS ON THE LAND

OVER THE YEARS, this magazine has published a variety of articles dealing with the problem of the agricultural worker. Many of our readers probably remember the account of con-

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ditions among migratory workers, as seen by a deeply concerned bishop, written for these pages by Archbishop Robert E. Lucey of San Antonio several years ago. Others will recall the report by Ernesto Galarza of the National Agricultural Workers Union on the difficulties encountered by those who try to help the workers on our corporate farms. Most recently, we published an article by Ted le Berthon of the California *Register* which dealt with the conditions encountered by citizens of Mexico who are imported by the thousands every year to pick crops in U.S. fields. It would be good, in this year 1957, to be able to report that articles like these, in this and other magazines, had had their effect and that great improvements had taken place in the condition of the agricultural workers, but this would not be the truth. Reforms have been made here and there, and some small successes have been achieved, but the overall picture is bad. Native or imported, in good times or bad, the laborer in the field seems to be the forgotten man—neglected by Congress, ignored by agricultural leaders, and, for that matter, overlooked entirely by most of the leaders of organized labor.

Yet men of good will are still trying to do something about this situation, and they deserve every support. Recently a conference was held in New York under the sponsorship of the National Sharecroppers Fund to give renewed impetus to these efforts, and out of it came plans for a nationwide campaign to improve the lot of migratory farm workers, imported farm labor, and low-income farmers. Major labor organizations will be asked to help finance a new organizing drive among workers on the factory-in-the-field corporation farms by the hard-pressed National Agricultural Workers Union, A.F.L.-C.I.O., or, if they are unwilling to do that, to take these farm workers into already existing industrial unions. As for low-income farmers, the conference asked for help for them and an end to present efforts to force them out of agriculture entirely—a trend, it was noted, which is apparently being encouraged by the Federal government. On contract labor by those imported from abroad, the conference noted widespread abuses and called for the appointment by Secretary of Labor James Mitchell of a public-labor-industry committee to make a full and impartial investigation—a suggestion we heartily endorse. And for native-born migratory workers, the conference urged such measures as minimum wages, better housing facilities, filing of payroll records, and the like. None of these recommendations by the conference seems in any way exorbitant; that they have to be asked for at all indicates the extent to which the agricultural worker has been consistently ignored. All we can do now is hope that those concerned with the problem, both inside government and out, will redouble their efforts to repair some of the effects of decades of exploitation and neglect.

DANGERS OF JOURNALISM

THE ARTICLE by Mr. Christopher Dawson which appears in this issue is sufficient reason to recall an exchange which followed the publication of his latest book in England. Reviewing *Dynamics of World History* for the *Spectator,* a journal we very much admire, Christopher Hill wrote: "It is perhaps unfair to consider Christopher Dawson's posthumous book together with an anthology of pronouncements on history made by great historians from Voltaire to the present day. The late Mr. Dawson was not a great historian: he was a diligent Roman Catholic publicist with a considerable and genuine interest in history."

Not surprisingly, the *Spectator* was able, the following week, to print—under the rather frivolous caption, *Manalive*—this letter from Christopher Dawson. "Sir, my attention has just been drawn to the article in your current issue by Mr. Christopher Hill on 'The Church, Marx and History,' in which he states that 'the late Mr. Dawson was not a great historian.' I do not wish to assert that I am 'great,' but I do most emphatically deny that I am 'late,' and I feel doubtful whether a writer who is unable to discover the truth in a contemporary matter of fact which is easily ascertainable is competent to survey the vast field which he has embraced in his article. . . ."

This exchange confirms the dangers that we all know to exist. For the well-known and long-lived artist or thinker whose works merited praise and whose ideas gained currency early in his life, there is always the danger that younger readers will too readily consign him, if not his ideas, to the past. For the critic there is always a danger in tangling with a living writer. (How much nicer for Mr. Hill if his target had not responded.) For the journal, there is always the danger of being too trusting, of printing a stunning blunder. While we sympathize more with Mr. Dawson than with Mr. Hill—and who would deny all sympathy to that poor man—our greatest sympathy, naturally, goes to the editors of the *Spectator.*

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Christianity and Oriental Cultures

Religion in the East is not a private matter for the individual conscience, as in the modern Western world

by CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

IN DISCUSSING Christianity and the Orient, it is essential to distinguish between oriental nationalism and oriental culture. The two questions are apt to be confused, naturally enough under the present circumstances, when the conflict between East and West is always seen as an international political issue. But oriental nationalism is a very recent phenomenon and from the historical point of view the great barrier between East and West had not been due to nationalist sentiment, but to religion and culture.

In the East, as in the medieval West, man's primary and fundamental allegiance was not to his nation, but to his religion, and men thought of themselves as Moslems or Hindus or Buddhists or Sikhs, rather than Egyptians or Indians or Indonesians. The one great exception is China, and China was not a nation but a civilization—and a civilization of a very unique and exclusive character which had been identified for thousands of years with a particular tradition of thought and distinctive ideals of moral behavior.

Modern nationalism has brought the East nearer to the West than ever before; its success has been due to its assimilation of Western culture, and its leaders have been that part of the population which has been most deeply influenced by modern Western ideas, above all the class of students who have studied in Western schools and universities and who use English or French as their second language. But behind this world of the new oriental intelligentsia, there is the older world of the traditional religious culture whose roots reach back to the most remote past. Although their influence has been steadily decreasing for the last century or two, they still mould the minds and lives of their members down to the smallest details of behavior, and even the Westernized minorities which have revolted against the tyranny of tradition and custom keep a profound bond with them which goes far deeper than any conscious loyalty, like the bond of the child with his mother's womb.

RELIGION in the East is not a private matter for the individual conscience, as in the modern Western world, where men of different religions and sects can share the same culture and society without any sense of strain or conflict. The religions of the East are sacred orders or liturgical cultures in which every detail of behavior has a religious significance, so that it is possible to tell what a man's religion is by the way he eats his dinner or ties his dress.

This is most obvious in the case of Hinduism, which is an immense and intricate hierarchy of hereditary religious societies, each governed by its own religious laws and rites, and all subordinated to the highest caste of the hereditary priesthood, which preserved the monopoly of learning and ritual and legal knowledge. Thus the whole social system and the social function of the individual are of divine right, and hedged round with religious sanctions and rites. The position of the State is unimportant since the hereditary religious societies and castes transcend the State and it is their law, not that of the State, which rules men's daily lives.

In contrast to this we have the case of China, which was the most secular in spirit of all the great civilizations and owed its unity not to a religion but to an empire, the historical origin of which is older than that of Rome, while its tradition goes back further still into the mist of pre-historic legend. Nevertheless the civilization of ancient China was also a sacred

Mr. Dawson discusses a subject he treats at greater length in his Revolt in Asia, published this year by Sheed and Ward in England.

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order—a liturgical civilization founded on the sacred rites—and demanded the total subordination of the individual to the sacred traditions that had been handed down from antiquity. When we consider the great ceremony that was carried out without a break by the Emperors of the Altar of Heaven and the constant emphasis of the State ritual on the dependence of the Empire on the Mandate of Heaven, it is impossible to describe ancient Chinese culture as secular. At the same time it is not religious in our sense of the word. It has a certain resemblance to the official religion of the Roman Empire in the Augustan age.

In the case of Islam, on the other hand, the religious character of the culture is much easier for us to understand, since its theological background has much in common with that of Catholicism. The Moslem theologians lay down in categorical terms that the purpose of human life is the service of God—*'Ibâda:* that Moslem society is a community expressly constituted to fulfill this purpose, and that it is the function of the State to safeguard the community in carrying out its liturgical mission both against the external enemy by the conquest of the unbelievers and by defending it against the perils of heresy and schism. There is no room for nationalism, since all the Moslems are brothers: and there is no room for political democracy, since Islam is a theocracy, and both the religious community and the political State exist only to assert the divine authority and to carry out the divine law.

THESE THREE worlds of culture were entirely diverse and incommensurable both in thought and in social institutions. But owing to the absence of nationalism they possessed a greater degree of internal organic unity than Western civilization. These great unities are so impressive by their antiquity and monolithic stability that they have given rise to the idea of the "unchanging East" and of the stationary and unprogressive character of oriental culture. But actually in the past they were all growing organisms and enjoyed their periods of expansion and progress.

The influence of Chinese culture spread all over the Far East eastwards to Korea and Japan, westwards into Central Asia and south to Indo-China. So, too, Indian culture underwent a great movement of expansion in antiquity and above all in the early Middle Ages, and its sphere of influence extended far to the south and east to Ceylon and Cambodia and Champa and Java, as well as northward to Tibet and Central Asia.

But the most striking example of the expansion of oriental culture is to be seen in the case of Islam, which has continued to expand from its original center in Arabia until it has spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Volga and the Irtish to the Zambesi and the Niger. Nor can we say that this expansion is a thing of the past. Islam is still advancing in Africa and may well become the dominant power in that continent.

Thus we must recognize that down to fairly recent times it was the oriental cultures that were the main centers of world power and economic development and that Christendom was comparatively weak and poor and backward. It had been steadily pushed out of Asia and Africa by the advance of Islam, which was built on the ruins of an older Christian world. Even in Europe the situation was uncertain, since Spain and Sicily formed an integral part of the Islamic world in the early Middle Ages, Russia was incorporated in the Mongol world empire in the thirteenth century and the advance of the Ottoman Turks in Southeast Europe extended the frontiers of Islam to the Danube and beyond.

Yet in spite of all this, the last few centuries have seen a complete reversal of the situation: the rise of Western culture to a position of world hegemony, and a revolutionary process of change in Asia which has destroyed the old oriental empires and changed the character of the oriental cultures.

THIS PROCESS of world revolution—for it is nothing less—has passed through three successive phases. First there was the age of European discovery and colonization which gradually destroyed the separate worlds of the old cultures and created a global system of communication and trade under European control. Secondly, there was the breakdown of the old Asiatic empires owing to their inability to withstand the economic pressure of Western trade, the efficiency of Western technology and the influence of Western ideas. Finally, the third phase saw the internal transformation of oriental society by the spread of Western education and the rise of the nationalist movements, which represented at the same time a revolt against the West and the acceptance by the East of Western culture and political ideology. Here, indeed, is a remarkable paradox, that a movement which is rallying the peoples of Asia and Africa against the West is at the same time removing the cultural barriers between them and doing all in its power to diffuse Western

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education, Western science and Western political ideologies.

It is obvious that these great changes must have a profound influence on the relations between Christianity and the oriental peoples. In some cases Christianity may be regarded as the spiritual aspect of colonialism and consequently resisted as a foreign and anti-national phenomenon. In other cases Christianity is itself associated with national minorities, as in the Near East.

In the case of the two greatest oriental civilizations, in India and China, Christian influences played a considerable part in the rise and development of the national movements, and the fact that the introduction of Western education into Asia was largely the work of Christian missionaries made for the growth of Christian influence on culture.

But the nationalist revolutions have broken down the age-old barriers of tradition and custom which in the past made it so difficult for the Church to speak directly to the hundred peoples of the East. The passing of the old order means the relaxation of the social pressures which often made religious change impossible, and the secular character of the new national states usually involves the acceptance of the principle of religious toleration. Thus in the East today the Church finds herself faced with a similar situation to that which she had to encounter in the earliest period of her history. Then also the civilized world was passing through a period of revolutionary change. The civilizations of the ancient East—Egypt, Syria and Babylonia—which were of immemorial antiquity had been subjugated by a Western movement of colonialism and imperialism, although they still retained their cultural identity and their old religious traditions. The resistance of Egypt to the influence of alien culture was just as strong as that of China or India to the West. Yet in spite of this the Church, beginning in the great cosmopolitan cities of the Mediterranean, gradually spread through the whole of the Middle East, until by the fifth century the ancient religious cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia had been almost entirely replaced by Christianity.

Is such a change conceivable in Asia today? Certainly there is the same opportunity, since the advance of modern Western culture has broken down the barriers between the peoples in much the same way as the Roman empire and the Hellenistic cosmopolitan culture broke down the barriers between the ancient cultures of the Near and Middle East two thousand years ago. But in the modern world the forces of religion are much weaker than they were in the ancient world and the forces making for secularization are far stronger.

IN THE EARLY centuries of the Christian era the world was aflame with a passionate interest in religion. It had lost its faith in the State and its interest in politics and had turned its eyes to the supernatural and to the hope of a divine savior. To such a world the Christian gospel came as the answer to a universally recognized need and it swept through the dry wood of the dead civilization like a forest fire.

Today the situation is a very different one. There is the same discontent with the old order—the same thirst for something new. But the objectives are different: they are material and this-worldly: release from poverty and insecurity and admission to an equal status with the privileged classes and peoples. Hence the appeal of Communism to the East, since Communism offers to the poor and underprivileged the hope of a kingdom of heaven on earth, while at the same time satisfying their resentment against the rich and powerful classes and nations that have exploited them. But the old religions and cultures have been moulding men's lives and thoughts for thousands of years; Western influences and also Christian missionary activity have been at work for centuries, or at any rate for a century. Communism is something entirely new—so new that it may have changed its character by the time that it has been fully adapted to the Asiatic environment. Although the East is in a state of fermentation and change, there is still an enormous mass to be leavened, and in many countries the process of change is still confined to the educated minority, which is naturally an urban class. The vast majority of the people of Asia still live in their villages, and their lives are more remote from those of the nationalist or Communist intelligentsia than those of the latter are from the West.

A good example of this fact is to be seen in the recent study of an Indian village which was carried out by a team of Indian research workers headed by Dr. S. C. Dube. The village in question was in the State of Hyderabad and only twenty-five miles from the capital of the State, which is one of the largest cities in India. Yet, in spite of this, many of the inhabitants had never heard of Mr. Nehru or Mahatma Gandhi, little was known of the movement for Indian independence, and national consciousness was vague.

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The real community was the village and the sub-caste, and "to the great bulk of the people caste-mythology was their only history." Although Communism is active in the region and the Communist or rather Communist-supported candidate was successful in the first public election ever held (in 1951), its influence was very superficial and did not touch culture or religion. The religious life of the village goes on unchanged and it centers, not so much in the worship of the high gods of classical Hinduism, but in the local cult of the village goddesses—Pochamma, the goddess of smallpox, Mutyalamma, the goddess of chickenpox, Maisamma, the boundary goddess, and half a dozen more.

The modern world seems very remote from this little world, in which the craftsman still worships the instrument of his craft and where the untouchables still perform religious dramas, celebrating the exploits of the legendary founder of their sub-caste. But its influence is seeping in by a hundred channels. Nothing can prevent its ultimate triumph, but it is still not clear what the dominant force in the new culture will be.

WILL THE dominant force be a drab secular materialism of the type that is so prevalent in the modern world or a militant Communism or some kind of reformed Hinduism? At first sight there seems little hope that Christianity will be the gainer or that there is any more chance of the Eastern world becoming Christian than there was one hundred years ago. Nevertheless, though we cannot accept the cocksure historical determinism of the Marxians or the ambitious speculations of the philosophers of history, like Spengler and Toynbee, we believe as Christians that the hand of God is at work in history and that the great revolution of world culture that is taking place before our eyes is the instrument of divine purpose.

But we also have our part to play, and not the least important factor in this is the contribution that we make to the process of study and criticism and spiritual questioning upon which the peoples of the East are now engaged. They have been just as conscious as we are of the world crisis which is affecting civilization. For more than a century the impact of Western culture has made them re-examine the foundations of their civilization, so that they have been forced either to criticize or to justify their traditional way of life and the religious foundations on which it was based.

The idealization of Eastern spirituality against Western materialism, which was characteristic of the earlier phase of the nationalist movement, is being replaced by a spirit of historical criticism which shows no respect for the sacred traditions of the past. This is especially the case in China. Social criticism of this kind may reach a point where there is no turning back; the old civilizations have been so violently torn from their traditional roots that it is impossible to revivify them. Whatever order takes their place will be something radically new, whether it is a democratic nationalism on the Western pattern or a totalitarian state. But in either case there remains a spiritual vacuum, like that we have already experienced in the secularized civilization of the Western world.

Wherever the new forces develop freely, and in proportion as the people of Asia and Africa take their equal share in the cosmopolitan civilization of the modern world, there will be a new religious need which will not be satisfied by the traditional answers of the old religious culture.

As in the ancient world, there will be a free market in ideas and any apostle of any creed who is able to satisfy the spiritual needs of modern man will obtain a hearing. Not that I think the debate will be a philosophical and metaphysical one as it was in the ancient world. This is not a metaphysical age, and in the East no less than in the West men are more interested in subsistence and coexistence than in essence and existence. Yet they still seek spiritual nourishment. There is a general sense of frustration and bewilderment and a need for a common purpose and a common hope. Up to a point the new political and national movements supply this, but not permanently and not for everyone. The deeper spiritual needs of mankind must always remain, unless we can accept George Orwell's nightmare alternative of a completely dehumanized civilization.

THUS THE CHURCH today and in the immediate future is confronted with a tremendous opportunity. The civilization of the new world has an immense unsatisfied spiritual need. The Church has a universal spiritual mission, which she has hitherto been unable to fulfill because the nations have been separated from one another, speaking different spiritual languages, enclosed in separate worlds, each of which has been shut off from the rest by walls of custom and tradition. Now the old barriers that divided the nations have been broken down, and the sacred laws that ruled men's lives for thousands of years have lost their power.

But do we Christians today possess the power and the vision to carry out this apostolate in this new world that I have described? Although the opportunity is great, the difficulties are great also, and it will need great spiritual energy to overcome them. On the one hand, we are faced with the negative opposition of modern secularism and materialism, which has a formidable champion in Communism and which renders all Christian action in China and Central Asia most difficult. And on the other hand we have to face the challenge of religious nationalism, which rejects

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Christianity as an alien power—an instrument of foreign domination—and identifies national loyalty with loyalty to the religious traditions of the nation. This is a paradoxical attitude in that it is political rather than religious and does not necessarily involve a revival of religious faith. It does, however, lead to an anti-missionary propaganda and an anti-Christian ideology which put serious obstacles in the way of missionary activity, above all in the sphere of education.

Neither of these two difficulties is insurmountable, but I do not think we have as yet discovered how they can best be dealt with. Here there is need for much study and possibly for new experiments and new techniques. I believe however that they can best be dealt with on a national rather than a cultural basis. It is no longer a question of penetrating the closed worlds of the ancient civilizations—this work of penetration has been done for us by the secular forces that have created the new oriental nationalism. It is now a matter of making a direct approach to each nation individually.

This approach may be made on a number of different planes. In the first place the most obvious approach seems to be to the new educated classes who are the creators and leaders of the modern Orient. They are the most accessible to us since they belong to the same world society and are faced with the same problems as we are. Here Christianity enjoys a certain advantage, since it has a far greater experience of the religious problems of a secularized society than any other religion except perhaps Judaism. Moreover, the educated Asian tends to be educated in Western literature rather than in the classical literature of the oriental culture and this provides a basis for mutual discussion and understanding. Yet, on the other hand, it is on this level that the nationalist and political prejudice against Christianity and against any form of missionary activity is strongest. For the less a man practices his own religion the more he is inclined to resent the universal claims of Christianity.

Still, it is true that the plane that is most remote from Western influence, that of the oriental underworld—the world of the villages and of traditional culture—is often more accessible to missionary influence, for it is here among the poor, the unprivileged and the outcasts, that the supernatural appeal of the Gospel is most evident. The ultimate test of the Christian apostolate is that which was laid down by Our Lord Himself in His message to St. John the Baptist: "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." And this principle has always been justified by the great representatives of the Christian apostolate from SS. Peter and Paul to St. Francis Xavier and more recently by men like Father Damien and hundreds of foreign missionaries.

But in addition to these two widely separated worlds of the intelligentsia and the peasants, there is a third intermediate sphere which is perhaps the most important of all. For when we read the Acts of the Apostles we find that the decisive success of the first Christian apostolate was neither with the intelligentsia nor with the peasants. St. Paul preached alike to the unsophisticated Hellenist public at Athens and to the simple peasant population of Lycaonia, who hailed Paul and Barnabas as gods and brought out oxen and garlands to sacrifice to them. But the world mission of the Church was established for all time in the great urban centers of the ancient world—at Antioch and Ephesus and Corinth and Rome and among the international lower middle class population of the great cities—shopkeepers, artisans, merchants, slaves and freemen of the great houses. It was in this uprooted denationalized cosmopolitan population that the spiritual need was greatest and that the word was most eagerly heard and accepted. And so these cities became the centers of the new Christian world and it was from their population that the teachers and the martyrs of the new faith came forth.

If we do our part is it not possible that the key points of oriental Christianity in the modern Asia of tomorrow will be found in the great urban centers like Calcutta and Bombay, Tokyo, Shanghai, Canton, Singapore—that the new churches will find their future leaders in the same urban cosmopolitan classes from which the leaders of the primitive Church were drawn? The soil must be broken—the plough and the harrow must do their work. But this is the age of the plough and the harrow, not the time of harvest.

HUSBANDRY

Between wind and sun,
have a hand tempered to seed;
in the stallion season, meditate earth:
gold, then, shall not equal worth
of grain for bread of need.
Be proper steward to expectation.

Often, observe the ant, the careful kind
which works mottoes into the dream
of castled stone on stone, of long eaves,
buttressing the keen knowledge: as leaves
give into winds, the surest beam
buckles rooves, however summer shined.

Against all darkness keep the word
of light well marked by the unproud heart,
wise in the metrics of the pulse of man:
against this measure let all maxims scan,
remembering the promise, and the part
breath plays in the paradise of the bird.

JOHN FANDEL.

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WANTED: EGGHEADS

SPUTNIK was a shock all right. The President of course knew the Soviets had been firing intermediate and intercontinental missiles. Maybe he was not surprised. But the rest of us did not know what the radar station in Turkey reported to him. We were really shaken by the news.

Why was it such a shock? The idea of a man-made satellite was not new. It has been a science-fiction fixture for years. What really shocked us was that we did not get there first.

It has been said that every society lives on its myths. And one American myth which had really taken hold was the belief that we were the superior of all other peoples in scientific accomplishments and always would be; it was as if American superiority had evolved from some unchangeable natural law. I suspect that we have for a long time confused technological achievement with scientific genius; we have confused know-how with how-do-you-know.

Now a myth in this sense of the word is not necessarily untrue. Perhaps we are still the superior of all others; perhaps the *sputnik* will soon be overshadowed by some great American invention. Our political leaders, in their attempts to comfort us, have hinted as much. But at the moment the Soviets have outdistanced us, and that is hard to take. Myths die hard.

For the first few weeks after *sputnik* was launched you heard people saying that it really was an American accomplishment after all, for the Russians would not have been able to do it if it were not that American spies had given our national secrets to Stalin—secrets, incidentally, which were developed by refugee scientists. One important official dismissed the *sputnik* as a bauble. But nobody took him seriously.

Some wiseacre invented a *sputnik* cocktail, which is one part vodka and two parts sour grapes. But I don't think the popular reaction was just sour grapes. It cut deeper than that. The deeper thing was that a myth was dying. For any people that is a traumatic experience.

An era ended with the *sputnik*. Its epitaph might be found in the words of the Administration official who said that basic scientific research was when you did not know what you were doing. The era lasted a long time. It was marked by the exaltation of the doer over the thinker. Remember those jokes about the absent-minded professor. He was always a bearded gentleman; I take it that indicated he was not a native but an exotic dreamer who unaccountably found himself among hard-headed practical men of action. Anyway he was clearly not one of us.

Other fictional professors were not absent-minded, they were absolutely out of their heads. How many of us were brought up on a cinematic diet of mad scientists—scientists, be it noted, with accents.

During the McCarthy era, anti-intellectualism became not so much a national predilection as a doctrine of 100% Americanism. In the atmosphere of a few years ago the man who did his work with no more than a blackboard and a piece of chalk was not just befuddled, he was widely regarded as sinister. His kind was almost always to be found in the group crying out against the McCarthy method of fighting Communism. He kept asking to be left alone, saying that he wanted to get on with his work and adding that until he was left alone it would be impossible for him to work. That was enough to tag *him*.

Now we need the "basic" thinker, the man who does his work with a blackboard and a piece of chalk. How we need him! I suppose that right at this moment he is the most sought-after man in America. We feel exposed to all the uncertainties and fearsome mysteries of *sputnik*. We have faced up to the frightening truth that we are behind the Soviets and that it will take us years to catch up. At this moment if we could re-write all the national budgets of the 1950's, how we would shower such a man with assistance. If we could recall all the absent-minded professor jokes that kept young men of talent from turning to abstract science, how gladly we would do so. If we could go back in time and reward all those of talent and genius who gave up scientific speculation for industry and larger paychecks, how pleased we would be to do so. If we could undo all the harassment that was visited on the despised eggheads in the first half of this decade, would not the vote be overwhelmingly favorable?

For the appearance of the *sputnik* was the eggheads' bitter victory. America should have a *sputnik* whirling in space. But we know now that impassioned anti-Communist rhetoric won't put it there, nor will "common sense," nor will the House Un-American Activities Committee, nor will a bigger and better year at General Motors, nor will larger college football stadiums, nor will the mass sale of color television. Jayne Mansfield can not help, nor Roy Cohn, nor the editors of *Confidential,* nor Mike Todd, nor Norman Vincent Peale. Not even bringing the Dodgers back to Brooklyn will do the trick.

We need eggheads. And where are they? Maybe they are all collecting Marilyn Monroe pinups or writing copy for the Madison Avenue agencies or poring over yellowed newspapers to find who signed what in 1937. Maybe even they got tired of being different.

JOHN COGLEY.

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A brief encounter
with a survivor of Siberia

Conversation in Moscow

by GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

I MADE his acquaintance by a pure coincidence. I was looking for a certain street and asked directions, in Russian, of a man I met on the sidewalk. This was during the great Communist Youth Festival and all the inhabitants of Moscow were instructed to be extremely kind and helpful. He had hardly opened his mouth when another man appeared behind me, who obviously had overheard my question and offered himself to put me right. After a few words in Russian he switched over to a quite fluent English, which made a strange contrast to his clothes, extremely shabby even by Russian standards. He was darkish and tall, wore glasses and had hardly any teeth left, in spite of the fact that he could not have been more than fifty. To test his reaction, I casually mentioned that I had been in Hungary during the uprising. He replied that he himself had been through worse, and when I asked him what he meant, he made a vague gesture and said that it was a long story.

I made sure that he did not simply want to make me talk, and then we spent more than five hours together, in half empty buses or streetcars or just sitting on benches in parks and public gardens, moving about ceaselessly in order to avoid interested listeners. He said that it was the first time in many years that he had talked with a Westerner or even spoken English. As he talked he perspired abundantly all the time in spite of the fact that the day was cool. Again and again during our long talk he said to me: Mind the expression of your face! Pretend we are studying the architecture of the house in front of us! Seem not to know me until these two men have passed by!

He had been in Siberia ten years in one of the worst camps, the name and place of which he described in every detail. The fact that he had survived was as great a surprise to himself as to his jailers. For ten years, he said, he had suffered such starvation that he felt it like a constant unbearable pain in the middle of his body.

He was a Russian who had left Russia before the revolution and had settled down in South Africa, where he had grown up and had finished his studies. But during a visit in the Soviet Union, to see relatives, he had been arrested in a round-up of "subversives," tried, and sentenced to Siberia. Now he lived with some relatives; the whole family was herded together in one room of a three-room flat, sharing the kitchen and the toilet with two other families. According to him this was a quite normal arrangement for the majority of Russians. After his ten years in Siberia he was officially "rehabilitated," but actually with no possibility of finding a definite job. There are innumerable unemployed in the U.S.S.R., he said, but we are not officially recognized. We can only try to eke out a living on all sorts of odd and miserably paid jobs.

Here, he said, showing me a translation of a Soviet propaganda publication in the West. This is the sort of job I am compelled to, when I am lucky enough to get it. This is what I do—for a piece of bread!

A year ago, he went on, my wallet was stolen by a pickpocket. You can't imagine what that means for one of us. The loss of the money is nothing compared to the loss of the identity papers, particularly the worker's card. Without this card you are unable to get even the most unimportant and occasional job. It was as if I had lost the very justification to exist. I was driven to such a despair that I thought of doing away with myself.

But my wallet was brought to me one morning by a street cleaner who had found it on the floor of a public toilet. Naturally the money was gone and a part of my identification documents too. Since then I have vainly tried to get new ones, but the Soviet bureaucracy is massive, stupid and completely inefficient. Everywhere I have the same handicap: to have been in Siberia, and to have survived, particularly to have survived.

The deportations to Siberia, he went on, or for that matter even simple arrests are not as numerous now as they used to be. There is progress. But you can't imagine how great the fear is in spite of all. You know about Pavlov's dog? It got its food only when a bell was rung, and finally it was "conditioned" to such a point that its mouth dripped as soon as it heard the bell, even if it did not get the food. Exactly the same

Mr. Kumlien, The Commonweal's correspondent in Rome, recently returned from a trip to Russia.

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with the Russian people. There are certain signs which still produce the wildest fear, even though the reason for the terror is not what it used to be. If it had not been for the festival I would never have dared to talk to you as I do now. But there are so many official and unofficial interpreters about, attached to the foreigners, that I have taken the risk.

BUT, I SAID, isn't there something new stirring among the Russian people? Don't they hope for a better future now, now that the Stalinists have been eliminated?

My strange companion laughed. You know, he said, because of my translations I sometimes manage to read foreign newspapers, and I have seen the elaborate and far-fetched theories put forward by foreign diplomats and journalists. The reality is much less complicated. Everybody courageous, intelligent and strong enough to form an opposition has now been eliminated. There is not one person among all the people you see in Moscow or anywhere else in Russia who has not had at least one relative eliminated for his "unsuitable qualities." The survivors, the sheep and conformists, have been breeding more sheep and more conformists. Don't forget that the third generation is facing it now —plus the isolation from the rest of the world and the deafening propaganda. You do not realize how these people feel and think.

Have you watched how the crowd on the Red Square behaves at the main entrance of the Kremlin? As soon as a car appears, they rush and push behind the police in order to see something of the people who sit in the cars. The reason is not that they wish to show their admiration for anybody in particular. They only wish to catch a glimpse of one of the powerful, no matter who it is, for it fills them with awe. They only know that the powerful leave and enter the Kremlin and that they move about in long black Zis cars. What happens between the mighty ones is so far beyond their horizon that they can't even imagine it.

THE ENORMOUS queues in front of the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum, I insisted. Aren't these people moved by some kind of belief?

He shrugged. They come from the countryside, he said, and they don't think of anything at all as they stand there and ruminate. They pass near the two mummies, who look as alive as if they could open their eyes again at any moment, and they think it is almost miraculous. Back home in their *kolkhozes* they boast of it all to their staring listeners. They don't think any further.

You don't know how we live. The housing shortage and the general misery are such that the energies of everybody are completely absorbed in trying to live one day after another in quarreling and squabbling in the families for a few square feet of space under a staircase, for the right to use the kitchen or the toilet five minutes more, for something warm to put on during the winter, for some more potatoes or herrings.

Now and again this mass of humanity is shaken by the wildest rumors as if by electric shocks. These rumors would probably appear crazy to Westerners, but they arise because of our isolation and because there is nothing in the papers. For instance, immediately before the festival a rumor began to circulate like wildfire that the West intended to poison the Russian people, poisoning the food or spreading diseases. In spite of the craziness of this, there were many Russian mothers stricken with panic for the sake of their children.

Everything has different proportions here, he said, both what happens and what does not happen. Practically nothing is in the papers, and everything that occurs seems to take on enormous proportions. Stories fly around about boats which capsize on the Volga, drowning all the passengers, about fires which break out, with hundreds of people perishing, crowded buses running at full speed into the walls of department stores. It is incredible how fast the information about such things travels from mouth to mouth.

With all this, the government is so afraid of this downtrodden crowd that the enormous police machine is mobilized at every occasion. Here in Moscow, for instance, they still put up machine guns in camouflaged positions as soon as a big crowd has begun to gather—as if under the present circumstances any menace could come from below.

The army is no different. If you give half a bottle of vodka to a Russian soldier, he will march straight on and blindly obey orders. He does not understand anything beyond what is immediately in front of him, as you have seen in Hungary. But that means, too, that if by any chance these soldiers received orders to march against each other, they would do so without a moment's hesitation. Everything depends on what happens at the supreme summit, and what happens there is hopelessly beyond the horizon of the masses. No opposition can come from below any more, a foreign intervention is not likely, and therefore the changes can come only from this supreme summit.

You mean the Communist Party, I asked.

Maybe—maybe not. The only thing which is sure now is that the Communists, who in spite of all used to have some sort of idealism, have now after all the turnabouts and inconsistencies become so cynical that they will shoot even their closest comrades. The ideology as such is dead.

And corruption is so widespread that practically anything can be obtained with favors and gifts, according to the different bureaucratic grades and ac-

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cording to a fixed tariff. The young Communists learn the tricks of the older ones and thus a sort of conservative traditionalism arises, which certainly will have a slowing influence on all changes.

The picture he had drawn was almost physically oppressing. No doubt it was slightly biased by his own terrible experience. We had passed lunchtime without even noticing it and I suggested that we should have something to eat in a place of his choice. He declined at once and said that it would attract too much attention. I asked him then if we could meet again. He agreed with obvious pleasure and we fixed an appointment for the next day.

He never came to the appointment.

Madison Avenue Witchcraft

by ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG

AMERICANS are haunted by the threat of having their brains brutally washed by politicians and their desires stealthily manipulated by advertisers. This specter looms large in the recent publicity given the success of Communist governments in brainwashing some captive Americans as well as their own citizens. Spectacular, though doubtful, progress in the physical and chemical treatment of anxious and manic states (lobotomies and tranquilizers, for example) adds to it. Finally, "motivational research" tops it all. The attempt of advertisers to exploit and manipulate the *unconscious* desires and fears of their prospects the better to sell them frightens everybody frightened by his unconscious desires, in other words, nearly everybody.

The threat is conjured up ponderously in William Sargent's *Battle for the Mind* (Doubleday, $4.50) and dexterously in Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* (McKay, $3.75). Dr. Sargent, unlike Mr. Packard, is inhibited by erudite pretensions; he does not exaggerate enough to make a splash. This is to his credit, of course. Yet, lack of a vice does not amount to a positive virtue. And Dr. Sargent writes badly. He is too tedious to be a good popularizer and yet he offers nothing new to his colleagues. Indeed, Dr. Sargent adds nothing to what Arthur Koestler and George Orwell have told us more vividly and concretely: that by inducing fatigue and arousing anxiety, nearly everybody can be confused and, finally, converted to whatever is drummed into him. Under such conditions, many then will accept and confess the crime, message, or belief that is suggested to them. Actually Dr. Sargent, a professional, seems less competent—and infinitely less sophisticated—in his field than either of these gifted amateurs. He determinedly reduces everything to fatigue, anxiety, conditioned reflexes and abreaction of tensions. Even psychoanalytic therapy is "explained" in this manner, and an anonymous patient of Freud is quoted as informing Dr. Sargent that Freud imposed his fantasies on his patients by wearing out their reason. (No doubt unintentional suggestion occurs, particularly in "wild" analysis. But it is a triumph of sheer ignorance to imply psychoanalytic therapy is nothing else.)

Dr. Sargent's near-denial of unconscious elements in the human personality and his attempt to reduce (rather than relate) mind to brain are anachronistic naivetes barely disguised as modern discoveries. No doubt a certain state of the brain is needed to confess, or to be converted, just as a certain state of the brain is needed to love, hate or learn Arabic. An exhausted man, for instance, might not do as well at language learning as a physically rested one; but rest alone produces no knowledge of Arabic. Dr. Sargent confuses a context—one which is neither indispensable nor sufficient—with a necessary and sufficient cause. By this logic, birth would be the cause of death. At least the Freudian explanation of conversion and of the breakdown of personality in terms of the unconscious elements that come to the fore in the context of fatigue and anxiety is explanatory—even if it should be wrong.

UNLIKE Dr. Sargent, advertisers now are losing some of their faith in reiteration and pure browbeating. Mr. Packard, who writes competently and is well-informed, discusses their increasing sophistication in an entertaining way. However, Mr. Packard exaggerates the effectiveness of advertising's appeal to unconscious motivation. Perhaps to magnify the threat, Mr. Packard tells us not only that "motivational re-

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search" is the rage of Madison Avenue, but also that it works wonders. Perhaps it does, but Mr. Packard offers no evidence. Why should advertisers succeed so easily where psychoanalysts do not, or certainly do not easily? Mr. Packard tells about successful campaigns but does not compare them with others not based on "motivational research," which might have been as successful. Nor does Mr. Packard tell how often motivational research has failed to help.

Finally, Mr. Packard does not give sufficient weight to the fact that the advertising agencies using "motivational research" are far from disinterested witnesses to its effectiveness. The primary task of an advertising agency is to sell its clients the idea of its own effectiveness; selling the clients' merchandise is only the secondary task. The first goal can be achieved independently of the second, for while the agency will take credit for any increase in sales, surely an increase may happen because, despite, or independently of, its activities. The many methods of checking effectiveness, however elaborate they may be, amount only to guesswork.

But regardless of how successful "motivational research" actually is, Mr. Packard's book about the success of "motivational research" is itself a bestseller. By instinct, or perhaps by "motivational research," Mr. Packard has hit on precisely the appeal that would sell his book. Thus Mr. Packard's own success has demonstrated what the contents of his book do not demonstrate half as well: one can sell something by appealing to unconscious motivations. In fact, Mr. Packard exploits these as skillfully as any of the "Hidden Persuaders" whose exploits he describes with so much awe.

His book caters to our insatiable appetite for "the inside story," an appetite spawned by the obsessive American fear of being manipulated by hidden forces. And the sources of this obsession are not so hidden. There is, for instance, the practice of American parents and educators of manipulating children by "progressive" devices without appearing to do so—a practice that extends from kindergarten through "student government" in college. Modern educators hardly say "do" or "don't" to children. Instead they "motivate," and the reward most often held out is popularity. Hence the suspicion and fear of *continued* hidden manipulation

which Mr. Packard, along with many other inside dopesters, exploits.

Granted, however, that Mr. Packard succeeded in selling his book by promising his readers to show them just how they are being manipulated—has he made a plausible case for what he asserts?

AS DO practically all the "inside story" writers, he presents a mixture of fact and fancy. The facts are interpreted out of all proportion to give them a sinister and menacing air. Of course "motivational research" can help advertisers or, indeed, anybody who wishes to influence anybody else. For it simply takes into consideration that influence is not gained and human action not determined by purely rational appeals.

But long before "motivational research," advertising was relatively unconcerned with the rationally relevant performance of the advertised product. Most of our expenditure goes for articles which satisfy socially-created needs. What matters is what we think they do for us. Cigarettes, girdles, aftershave lotions, whiskey, mink coats or sport jackets can hardly be sold only on a technical performance basis. Advertisers must rely on associations irrelevant to the product but relevant to its symbolic promise in the customer's mind. They make beer into a symbol of wholesomeness, identify perfumes with erotic fantasies, cars with prestige needs, soaps with numberless fears and wishes, cigarettes with virility, and so on.

It stands to reason, therefore, that advertisers should come to utilize *systematically* the elementary fact that any product—indeed, any part of the human environment—in addition to its rational functions carries a number of symbolic meanings and may be associated unconsciously with desired or feared things. Whether we personify New York as Father Knickerbocker or liberty as a woman or advertise a product in terms of the unconscious fantasies it may arouse, whenever we appeal to people, we mobilize, deliberately or not, irrational as well as rational associations. And psychoanalytic techniques—"motivational research"—can indeed be modified to help guess what type of advertising and product styling may have what effect on whom.

This is a long way, however, from Mr. Packard's drama in which the public plays Gretchen to a business Faust inspired by a Madison Avenue Mephistopheles—though Mr. Packard casts expertly in terms of the public's self-identification. Consumers like to squeal delightedly, "don't seduce me," at those ravishing advertising men, and Mr. Packard is only catering to their fantasy. Actually they are not putty in the manipulators' hands. They voted for Eisenhower whose personality was well-publicized—but also for Truman and Roosevelt when they were opposed by practically all mass media. People are influenced by impulses to

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which advertisers, producers and politicians cater, and these impulses are largely non-rational. But they are neither all-powerful, nor the creation of clever advertising men. "The intellect is . . . . the slave of passions," David Hume said. He exaggerated. Freud's metaphor—passions are the horse the Ego (which includes the intellect) must try to ride—is more correct and realistic. It is foolish of the rider to complain that the horse is always tempted by greener pastures. His task is to bridle it, not to complain about the beckoning temptation, whether natural or artificial.

IN SHORT, the "hidden persuaders" are not likely to make people any more irrational than they are. Irrational impulses are not implanted by them. And their attempt to manipulate irrational impulses to their advantage is not likely to make much difference. There are many such attempted manipulations and they offset each other; the demands of reality and reason will not become any weaker; and finally, most advertisers were doing just what "motivational research" tells them to do long before there was such a thing. "Motivational research" can only tell them more about why they are doing it.

To be sure, political leaders seem more likely to be selected by emotion rather than reason the larger the number of voters. But public relations advisers are the effect, not the cause, of this development, which is an unavoidable concomitant of masses and mass media. In terms of qualities relevant to the political issues to be decided, the selection of leaders can become nearly random. This is about as bad as hereditary leadership—also a nearly random selection—but it is not worse. It is viable, which is fortunate, for no remedy other than wishful thinking is in sight.

The real trouble with advertising is that its useful functions cannot easily be separated from useless ones. Even if these useless functions do not make consumers into helpless marionettes, they remain useless, at best, and costly, and often amount to a nuisance. Thus, although unlike Mr. Packard I do not see in competitive advertising (or in any non-monopolistic and non-coercive persuasion) a threat to our freedom of choice, however shrewdly advertisers appeal to our unconscious, I do think that the sixty dollars per capita that now goes annually into advertising is largely wasted, from the social viewpoint. And to some extent the expense is socially and culturally harmful. It raises false ambitions, it fosters de-individualization, and it tends to destroy culturally important values by homogenizing tastes.

As for the power of advertisers appealing to irrational motives in us, there is little to be done short of declaring the people as a whole mentally incompetent. But I think this power (and the people's incompetence) are vastly overrated.

THE STAGE

THE LAST ROMANTIC II

MR. JOHN OSBORNE is not the first young man to dramatize personal hostilities of class, and rage at some thwarting of the ideal self, in terms of sexual venom: indeed, there issues from "Look Back in Anger" much of the dirty rancor and upheaval of Strindberg's "Miss Julie," and some, too, of Lawrence's spittle (though almost nothing of his warm, tragic caring and emotional piety). In his gloss on this theme, Mr. Osborne does more than register the exact pressures of a kind of contemporary moral corruption; he illumines a last terrible encounter in the crisis of romantic feeling. For the married lovers of "Look Back in Anger" are not merely mismated children of spirit and nature, conventionally uncomprehending; they are rather its driven victims, stunted and perverse, void of any idea of the good which is more than illusory and self-regarding. Their real need is not love but power, and their real animation is not sexuality but destructiveness—an impulse, ironically, which they exercise not on the actuality, but on the *image* of each other. Charity, even of the flesh, is not possible to them, yet being vulnerable and human, they need (perhaps more than others) respect, tenderness, repose. And at this point, Mr. Osborne has imagined a most telling motif, for against the third force in this situation, the comfortable friend—man, as it were, in natural grace; the buffer state between two warring principalities—he is able to throw into relief all the exhaustions of passion, the squalor of manipulated power and the deceits of romantic illusion.

I have sketched a perfect fright of a psychological situation, yet one truly astonishing aspect of "Look Back in Anger" is its artful and unmitigated refusal to admit, as a point of intellectual reference, the possibility of clinical emotional disorder. That would be, elsewhere, a source of relief: the tough rectitude, perversity and zest which Mr. Osborne's personages bring to life is much closer to the actual texture of experience than the well-oiled, smooth functionality of conventional psychoanalytic insight. Yet so formidably does Jimmy Porter stand in the lineal order of neurotic pattern—the innate puritanism; the hatred of purity together with an impossible yearning after it; the bullish challenge of *with me or against me;* the grand assumptions of authority with no refinement or scope of mind to back it up; above all, the desperate assaults on the personality of others, in the forlorn hope that they will be able to give back the image of oneself one cannot fashion—so obviously are all these symptoms annotated that the omission becomes more than curious. It leads to a further point of inquiry: just how much

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is Mr. Osborne "taken in" by the figure of Jimmy Porter? what is the quality of creative belief he is committed to invest in him? I stand with Mr. Harold Clurman, who has described Porter acutely as "a sign, not a character—we can look beyond him and surmise some of the living sources in the civilization from which he issues." It is comparably true that Porter, imagined at another depth and by a controlled sensibility, would exact from both his creator and his audience wholly a different response.

In the largest sense, however, Mr. Osborne's commitment is not so much to Jimmy Porter and his values, whatever their nature, as it is to an abstract reconstitution of feeling. "I want to make people feel, to give them lessons in feeling," he has written. "They can think afterwards." Such a statement returns us at once to Mr. Eliot's dissociated sensibility: it is simultaneously touching and dangerous: touching because it recognizes the bankruptcy and the need; dangerous because it muddles the aesthetic problem (which is always to create *finer* feeling), and because the world already stinks with romantic excess, is putrid with the riot of *unearned* feeling, *unattached* feeling. I would hazard that the personages of "Look Back in Anger"—of Mr. Osborne, one may not speculate—are so obsessed with feeling just precisely because they *cannot* feel, have obscured or stifled the rational bases of feeling, lost the images of being which it is desirable to cultivate or to elect. The creative problem in life, after all, remains constant—a richer achievement of worthy being—and it is to Mr. Osborne's singular honor that he is dominated by the need. Yet if the problem presents itself largely, as it does to a contemporary, in the realm of feeling, any analysis of the attempt to reconstitute that faculty and that area must take a fuller account than does "Look Back in Anger" of society, of the self, of being and possibility and variousness. Nor can I believe that Mr. Osborne would relish the kind of barbaric chaos he seems romantically to yearn for: let him consider a statement from one of Santayana's letters, which is not without pertinence: "The idea that horrors are required to give zest to life and interest to art is the idea of savages, men of no experience worth mentioning and of merely servile, hunted sensibilities. Don't tolerate it."

I have scanted a production, directed by Mr. Tony Richardson, which catches much of the pitch and importunity of Mr. Osborne's vision, and records with merciless energy all the exacerbating brutalities of human proximity. Mr. Kenneth Haigh reads the monstrous angry young man in rather too open-throated and sentimental a vein of Byronic protest—I have seen this role played in London with a less comfortable and more self-lacerating relish—and Miss Mary Ure seemed to me, also, to miss an exact tone of beaten, dumb servility and obsessiveness. Mr. Alan Bates conveys his teddy-bear amiability with distinction and even power—a performance notable for its impeccable social observation—while Miss Vivienne Drummond suggests admirably a kind of peremptory middle-class femaleness, ravening at first, which yet dilates later into something vulnerable and oddly touching. I might add that the rhetoric, scope and audacity of Mr. Osborne's attack on women are so inflammatory as to give "Look Back in Anger" the status of a document in sexual sociology. (*At the Lyceum.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

THE SUN THAT ALSO RISES ALSO SETS

THERE HAVE been surprisingly few war comedies since "Mister Roberts" and such occupation-minded items as "The Teahouse of the August Moon" and "Joe Butterfly," but there are several in production, not the least of which is "South Pacific." The trend, if such it is, got off to a good start a couple of weeks ago with the hilarious "Operation Madball" about G.I's in a hospital camp in Normandy. Unfortunately two new comedies about the Navy, both of which strain to be funny as they play fast and loose with sex, succeed mainly in saying cynically that this will be the Lost Generation of World War II.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about "Kiss Them for Me" is that it wasn't made into a movie earlier. The play by Luther Davis, based on Frederic Wakeman's *Shore Leave,* appeared in 1945. No doubt the movie makers thought their audiences weren't ready for this kind of wartime cynicism and high jinks. The film, considerably watered down from its originals, sets its tone at the beginning: a group of Navy brass are looking at actual battle movies of pilot Cary Grant being rescued in the Pacific after his bomber was shot down. His first question is, "Are there any women aboard?" And the Navy brass watching the movies comment, "There's a good healthy American attitude."

This "good healthy American attitude" pervades "Kiss Them for Me." Grant and two of his buddies (Ray Walston as a lieutenant running for Congress as a *wounded* war hero, and Larry Blyden as an easy-going Southerner with a couple of Purple Hearts) steal a shore leave in San Francisco. Since they are "probably the three greatest heroes in the Navy," they expect every girl to do her bit. In no time they organize an elaborate, free-flowing, long-running cocktail party; but it is interrupted occasionally by telephone calls from Grant's ex-wife, by various Navy personnel check-

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ing up on the officers and more particularly by a powerful shipbuilder. The shipbuilder (Lief Erickson) hopes the heroes will tour his plants to build up morale and thus help him get more defense contracts.

Stanley Donen keeps his picture moving at a fast pace but stops frequently to underline points about war profiteers, about the clashes among the various branches of the military forces (a pertinent point right now) and about the real wounded war heroes. The film's heroine, played by Suzy Parker, who switches from Erickson to Grant, is lovely to look at, but strangely enough Director Donen allows Jayne Mansfield to do such an absurd caricature of herself that her role becames nauseating. In fact most of "Kiss Them for Me" is concerned with young adults (some not so young) behaving like petulant adolescents.

IF THE NAVY did not get a good press during the war, it is probably due to the dim-witted characters who are the principal concern in "Don't Go Near the Water." According to this ill-advised movie, the Navy's Public Relations Department at the large command base on the Pacific Island of Tulura was kept so busy placating stupid officers, visiting Congressmen and correspondents from various magazines and papers that they had no time for any serious work. Producer Lawrence Weingarten and Director Charles Walters (who usually knows how to make a funny comedy) have made a rather dull and repetitious movie about the Navy in this version of William Brinkley's novel. It has an impressive enough cast, with Glenn Ford, Earl Holliman, Fred Clark, Russ Tamblyn, Jess Richards, Mickey Shaughnessy as members of the Navy staff, and Gia Scala, Anne Francis, Eva Gabor as pretty women who throw them for a loop. But the movie is such a hodge-podge of vulgar jokes and situations that it becomes a bore long before it squeezes the last laugh out of the last tiresome incident. In this film's navy there aren't any men—just boys who hang their clothes on a hickory limb.

THE ENGLISH, who enjoy a good laugh as much as anyone, have sent over a comedy about men in uniform. Because it is at times so ludicrous, "The Colditz Story" seems contrived, but its incidents showing how Allied prisoners escaped from Germany's escape-proof castle, are based on fact. Perhaps Director Guy Hamilton should have made the Germans a little more formidable, but he certainly allows their prisoners to exhibit brash courage and even brasher humor. At first the British, Poles, Dutch and French confined in the castle work at cross purposes, and their escape tunnels begin falling in on each other. But once the four nationalities start cooperating, their escapes become a reality. John Mills, Eric Portman, Ian Carmichael head the large and good cast. You may not believe "The Colditz Story" but you'll get laughs and thrills out of it.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

BOOKS

Byron as the Sum of Many Contradictions

BYRON: A BIOGRAPHY. By Leslie A. Marchand. Knopf. 3 Vols. $20.

By NORA MAGID

CONSIDER this man for whom life's enchanted cup but sparkled near the brim. Born of an irresponsible, gaming rake and a half-demented woman, raised in the bitterness of a broken home, made to feel inadequate because of his clubfoot, attracted to young boys and pursued by women of all ages, half in love all his life with his half-sister, married briefly and inauspiciously to a chillingly self-righteous and formidably smug maiden, given to alternating bouts of depression and exhilaration, of ravenous stuffing and stringent starving, dead of exhaustion and a fever at thirty-six. No other writer, save perhaps Dylan Thomas—and his peccadilloes beside those of Byron shrink to Rover Boy proportions—can furnish such grist for the analytic mill. The temptation for the contemporary biographer, steeped in Freud, to reduce Byron to his symptoms and their causes and effects, must be great. Professor Marchand has fortunately had the good taste and the good sense not to succumb.

He is that best of chroniclers—unobtrusive, unpalpitating, unsermonizing. Starting with no thesis and ending with no moral, he unfolds Byron's story chronologically, mainly in terms of the direct observation of those who were familiar with him, and who, in that most gossipy of centuries, recorded their impressions in their diaries, memoirs, and letters. Since Byron himself also found the time to be communicative, both about his life and his work, conjecture and reconstruction can be kept at a minimum. There is no nonsense about who might have said what to whom under various circumstances.

In essence the life is already familiar. It has been told many times before and from many points of view—well, by such men as Maurois and Quennell, abominably by hordes of sensation-mongers who have sought to have an orgiastic field day in exploiting the obviously sensational angles. What Professor Marchand does is to block in the known outline with a good many hitherto unrecorded details, and to sift the actuality from the possibility. Byron emerges the sum of his

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manifold contradictions, at the one time charming and diabolic, dedicated and dabbling, hero and villain. He appears as unwilling student, enthusiastic seducer, loving brother, serious poet, malicious critic (Keats he dubbed "a tadpole of the Lakes"), generous friend, frightful husband, melancholy expatriate. Short shrift is made of those hoary chestnuts, "to understand others is to forgive," and "to understand oneself is to improve." Probably no man ever lived whose own motivation was less veiled from himself, whose perception of that of others was more candid.

In childhood, he conceived "a horror of matrimony from the sight of domestic broils." Of his father, Mad Jack, he said, "he seemed born for his own ruin, and that of the other sex." With equal validity he could have applied the same words to himself. In the course of wrecking his own life, he contrived to involve some two hundred women. Always he combined the gentlest of sentiment with the coolest of cynicism. Of the first girl with whom he had truly been in love, he claimed, "she was the *beau ideal* of all that my youthful fancy could paint of beautiful; and I have taken all my fables about the celestial nature of women from the perfection my imagination created in her —I say created, for I found her, like the rest of the sex, anything but angelic."

His intention was to reap the rewards of material success. "The way to *riches,* to *greatness,*" he told his mother, "lies before me. I can, I will cut myself a path through the world or perish in the attempt." He did both. His school days passed in a haze of idealized friendships and passionate quarrels. Even at this stage, he had the Romantic sense of growing older and sadder, of drifting without roots, of being spiritually enervated. Physically, he debilitated himself with crackpot diets and crackers and vinegar, and when nobody was around to marvel at his asceticism, he fell on food in abandoned gargantuan binges. At Newstead Abbey, in the garb of a monk, he caroused by drinking from a skull and wallowing melodramatically in *Weltschmerz.* On the traditional grand tour, he stumbled in Greece across something he needed. Angered when he saw the natives apathetic to the carting off of the Elgin marbles, he identified with their cause even when they did not; in so doing, he found for himself a reason for living and dying, and for Greece the gift of hope.

He wrote the most cavalierly self-revelatory of poetry, and was only rarely embarrassed about indulging his penchant for confession of a titillating nature. *Childe Harold* made him famous overnight. Lionized in the salons of London, he ran into Lady Caroline Lamb, the eccentric skinny devotee of the arts, whose response to the poem had been, "I read it, and that was enough. . . I must know him." In her, he found his momentary match. She was as tough as he, irrationally certain that she must have whatever she wanted, and fiendishly inventive about ways to attain it. Her aunt, Lady Melbourne, became his confidante; her cousin, Annabella Milbanke, ultimately became his wife.

Annabella was a pampered, precocious, frosty young woman, a prig of the first water, with grandly inflated notions of what she felt she deserved in a husband. While all of fashionable London was throwing itself at Byron's head, he was paradoxically and characteristically attracted to this icy miss. Her long-range aim was to effect his reform; after marriage, she extended this to encompass his erring sister.

Throughout the engagement, he found her silent and she found him strange. Neither withdrew. Hobhouse recorded that when they were en route to the wedding, "never was lover less in haste." But the event took place as scheduled, and on what he referred to as his "treaclemoon," Byron awoke to find "that he was fairly in hell with Proserpine lying beside him." She wondered whose heart would break first, his or hers. At the beginning, he was already sure that it was too late, and that he had ruined her as he ruined all he touched. When she was in labor, he wished her dead. After the birth of their child, Ada, she left him.

Hounded by scandal—it was by this time rumored with fair certainty that he had had an affair with his sister and fathered her daughter, Medora—he departed from England, never to return. In this, Professor Marchand's sympathy is entirely with Byron. Annabella he condemns for her sadistic desire to worm a confession out of Augusta. He tends to gloss over the blatant cruelty she had suffered at Byron's hands.

Abroad, Byron entered upon his more mature literary existence. In Switzerland and Italy he and the Shelleys lived in close proximity. For some reason, each poet, while admiring the work of the other, took a dim view of his moral standards. Shelley, who himself had hardly lived the most upstanding of lives, took exception to Byron as "a slave to the vilest and most vulgar prejudices, and as mad as the winds." Byron in turn, found Shelley godless. But in this group there was companionship, and for Byron at least there was intellectual stimulation. Shelley, apparently overwhelmed, wrote little. Meanwhile, for Byron, the process of emotional healing set in. To Augusta, he wrote that he was endeavoring to forget "the tortures of the last two years and that virtuous monster, Miss Milbanke, who had nearly driven me out of my senses —curse her." He was also trying to forget Caroline Lamb and "Madame Claire—a damned bitch"—a member of the Shelley *ménage à trois* with whom he had had a child, Allegra.

The sense of Romantic doom hung over him still. "Mine has not," he pointed out wryly at thirty, "been the most regular, nor the most tranquil, of lives." And again, "I feel there is no more to look forward to." There was little enough. In the face of chronic malaise and quarrels with his ladies and his publishers, he continued to write. Always there was that combination of furious vitality and genuine ennui. "I am so bilious that I nearly lose my head, and so nervous that I cry for nothing; at

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least today I burst into tears, all alone by myself, over a cistern of Gold fishes, which are not pathetic animals."

Augusta he assailed because she had refused to continue the one substantially satisfying relationship he had known, and because, returning to her husband, she had made, he claimed, of her house a lying-in hospital. He accused her of having multiplied like a rabbit. He kept on with his crazy eating pattern. ("How long," Rogers had once asked, "will Lord Byron persevere in his present diet?" "Just as long as you continue to notice it," had been Hobhouse's answer.) He endured the death of Allegra, the drowning and burning of Shelley, and the presence in his own house of a curious legacy from Shelley—the indigent Leigh Hunt and his sour, waspish wife and six Yahoo children. Suddenly, he abandoned his concern with his own seesawing moods and turned to practical politics. He left the young Countess Guiccioli, with whom he had had a reasonably happy alliance of some duration, and went to Greece to enlist in the fight for freedom. In 1824, he died of a fever. Shortly before, he said, "Die I must; I feel it. Its loss I do not lament; for to terminate my wearisome existence I came to Greece."

Mr. Marchand is a remarkably intelligent and judicious biographer. His organization and style are admirably clear; his scholarship, the product of ten years of research, impeccable. Almost every word in these three handsome volumes (which surely constitute one of Knopf's best typographic and binding jobs) is unobtrusively verifiable in the thorough "Note" section. Looking at this, one marvels at the vast amount of material which he has assembled and pruned and correlated with the poetry in order to create a unified and complex portrait. Byron once said, "What I think of myself is, that I am so changeable, being everything by turns and nothing long,—I am such a strange mélange of good and evil, that it would be difficult to describe me." The difficulty has now been surmounted.

Comedy of Mores

THE MENDELMAN FIRE. By Wolf Mankowitz. Atlantic—Little, Brown. $3.75.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

THE SHORT stories in this volume can fairly be accounted glorified anecdotes; they are fronted by the novelette from which the title is borrowed. It is not a promising start by the promising British author of *Old Soldiers Never Die;* however, once it is out of the way the book comes into scale. Wolf Mankowitz draws par - for - the - course mileage from his Jewish folk heritage, which in literary terms is no willing horse; the contribution of the Cockney element is somewhat gaunt, but the proposition that fish 'n chips do not quite complement bagels and lox is not yet untenable.

The Mendelman Fire tells of two members of the gritty Jewish business community of London in the giddy twenties—Morris Mendelman, a dealer in the Kaffir trade, with *savoir-vivre* and the intimate pitch; and the accountant Leo Botvinnik, his foil as the sober but susceptible soul of positivism, who lists the woes of his colleague with running commentary. Botvinnik the accountant is a wizard, but Botvinnik the recountant is no match for him. He explains that without him Mendelman Clothes couldn't get out of mothballs, because for Morris's accounts you needed a slide-rule as yet unobtainable. It all adds up to a bored pastiche of mossy little-theater gags and histrionics, not a story.

The second section, "A Village Like Yours," has seven salty tales of the struggling Jewry of Old Russia, with much deliberate, predictable caricature of vulnerable piety in the orthodox household. Subserving the irreverent accent is a caustic humor; though never ceasing to be genre burlesque, it manages to burlesque the genre, at times ("Bonifas the Cobbler") in a pretty grisly way, but it is in the right key. There is verve in the antics involving such sure and ubiquitous butts as the writer's great grandfather, finest pipe-maker in Russia, his cunning "young grandfather," along with a whole brood of also-rans, including the cow Masha, determined to get into the act.

Mr. Mankowitz and Sholem Aleichem may employ the same indefinite creaturedom of archaic fabled types, but Mankowitz is less urbane and more literal in reducing them to farcical measure with no poetic attenuations. Thus geared as they are for intramural literary travesty, the sublime can have no quarter with the ridiculous except at the risk of being denatured; while the universal aspects of their foibles only make them seem more risible.

In "Good Business With Sentiment," the racy group of thumb sketches that closes out the book, the author is still riding the comedy of mores far out of the norm, but the idiom is more reliable.

Artless Novel

SULLIVAN. By Walter Macken. Macmillan. $3.95

By THOMAS F. CURLEY

IN RECENT years there has been a great to do about the techniques of fiction. So much has been written, said and pondered that it is a relief, in a way, to read *Sullivan.* Mr. Macken has no trouble with points of view. He uses whatever one is most convenient and sometimes drops into the story himself, just to make sure you get the point.

Young Sullivan was a born actor. There he was in a small town in Ireland, the son of a genteel mother who had too many headaches and ate too many aspirin, and of a gentle, patient father who, early in the book, is drowned trying to save a young boy from harm. As a result, the Sullivan boy stutters quite severely. He cures himself by reciting Shakespeare from a volume given to him by his father's former employer, an eccentric old man with

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a fragrant orchard and a lovely granddaughter named Bernie. Sullivan hates poverty, hates Duke Street, where he lives, and sets out to make a million on the stage. He starts in his home town, tours Ireland, joins a carnival for awhile, goes to Dublin, where he scores his first success, marries Bernie secretly—her grandfather had forbidden it—then not long after sends her back home to her grandfather while he goes after stardom.

His first play in London is a failure and he ends up on King Street, not much better than Duke Street. Then an American turns up, and takes him to New York to star in the play that had made his name known in Dublin. But the play fails in New York and Sullivan is reduced to a few T. V. shows. Then a hit. He's made it. Does he send for Bernie? Not at all. He moves into a posh apartment and becomes infatuated with the girl playing next to him. It takes a near-tragedy, a near-miracle and the intelligent use of the airplane to snatch him from his own foolishness and reunite him with his lawful wife.

Thank God for that. At the end of the book you feel like quoting W. C. Fields: "Send the kid home, he's no trouper." This is a little harsh. First of all Macken tells a story and Sullivan is a likable fellow even if he is an "eejit" as they say in some of Mr. Macken's earlier books.

One could also quarrel with the ending. For a novel that is apparently realistic, this ending just does not fit. Too much sentiment, too many unlikely happenings. It's as if Mr. Macken got tired or did not want a longer book, and so decided to resolve the dilemmas with what amounts to a deus ex machina.

The ending, however, is a symptom of a more radical defect: that is, Mr. Macken's willful artlessness. His hero is Sullivan but Macken does not scruple to shift his focus from Sullivan to a number of other people. There is nothing wrong with a shifting focus, of course, providing you justify it. Walter Macken does not.

Which brings me back to techniques of fiction. They are dull. But it is not enough to have the gift of gab. "Life is short and art is very long and besides it doesn't matter," as Frank O'Connor likes to say in *Mirror On The Roadway*. Maybe, but one must write as if it did matter. Mr. Macken does not. *Sullivan* is an entertaining but not a satisfying novel.

Life as Boredom

THOSE WITHOUT SHADOWS. By Françoise Sagan. Dutton. $3.95.

By BETTE RICHART

THIS WISTFUL allegory, the third book by the brilliant author of *Bonjour Tristesse*, is the same size and shape as her others; its dimension as a symbol is approximately that of a postage stamp. In itself, slightness is not a fault in art. But when it leaves a serious reader or spectator asking "Is that all?" it is a fault. Somehow I feel that Mlle. Sagan expected this indictment; that she knows very well her next book will have to be longer, wider or deeper if it is to merit an informed audience.

True, her style will not need, ever, to be different. It is as quick, simple and effective as the gesture we make in turning on a switch: suddenly, with no effort, there is light.

Mlle. Sagan's theme is related to Yeats' epigram: "Man is in love, and loves what vanishes. What

A Nation in Chains . . . .

HUNGARY UNDER SOVIET RULE

A Survey of Developments Since the Report of the U.N. Special Committee

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more is there to say?" Her variant is: "Man is in love, and loves what is out of reach." You see what happens during this subtle change from Yeats' philosophy to hers: tragedy becomes frustration, and human beings become absurd by reason of their childish willfulness, rather than sublime by reason of their strength to endure.

The point is in the title: those without shadows lack more than substance, they lack subtlety as well. A world without chiaroscuro has become a clinic; a person without it has become a bore. The obvious fact that such people bore each other does not redeem them; if mademoiselle has a lesson to learn, this is it. Even her touch will become clumsy if boredom continues as her sole plot.

Here is a sample of what boredom can do to a master's hand: "The soggy cigarette that Bernard tried vainly to light was a symbol of all they had in common, for they could never be really happy, and they knew it. And at the same time they knew, obscurely, that it didn't matter. It simply didn't matter." Unlike several other reviewers, I don't hear echoes of Sartre here; instead I see Ernie Kovacs murdering the scene. Think of him in a farewell with Kay Kendall, sitting on a wet park bench trying to light a soggy cigar, and you see a picture of a scene that makes excellent slap-stick, but not literature.

The *tristesse* of the first books was touched, iridescently, with *tendresse;* her first book reminded one of Elizabeth Bowen's *Death of the Heart,* in which one hardly hears the sound of breaking. The fall of girlhood's empire is soundless, compared with a shattered cocktail glass, but its effect is final. In any language, this is a haunting fact. Very early, Mlle. Sagan discovered that love is not necessarily contagious; like the rest of us, she will not recover from that discovery, but her distinctive art will not be perfected by reiterating it.

Sex is a compulsion, not a revelation, for her current cast of characters: Alain, a publisher in love with Beatrice, a young actress in love with her role as actress; Bernard, a critic in love with Josee, a wealthy girl in love with a medical student whose only charm seems to be that he is a demanding brute. Both Alain and Bernard have adoring wives. And all are caught like flies in amber in their own illusions.

Gilbert and Sullivan in "Patience," said it all.

> For iron the magnet felt no whim.
> Though he charmed iron, it charmed not him.

The litterateurs of *Those Without Shadow,* have not acquired any emotions more complex than those of the magnet and the iron. Because their minds are disciplined and their glands are not, they are able to remark, at the high tide of sensation, an absence of feeling. The critic Bernard, unmoved by his young wife's miscarriage, did not leave me in a state of moral shock; he simply left me wondering what insight he could possibly bring to an evaluation of *Crime and Punishment.* He left me wondering what he had read, that he should come to this.

At the risk of sounding rather obtuse, I must modestly suggest that Mlle. Sagan should read more before she writes again. Despite her purity of style (a purity which so far has disarmed criticism) there is a lack of texture and color which must be remedied, if she is to hold her niche among the analysts of manners. E. M. Forster, who certainly knows what a novel is if anyone knows, has something to say of life which profoundly affects novel techniques: "Life is not a muddle, but a mystery." On the basis of that statement alone, we could drown half the novels ever written, including this one.

A Rampage

THE TEMPLE OF GOLD. By William Goldman. Knopf. $3.75.

By JOHN A. LYNCH

ATHENS, Illinois is the home of Athens College, where Raymond Euripides Trevitt's father, a Greek scholar, is head of the classics department. We are introduced early to the fact that his father's interests have not developed in Raymond. Growing up, the things he is to remember most are Harriet, Annabelle, and "that beautiful night on Half Day Bridge" when, driving drunk, he smashed into the bridge and killed his best friend Zock Crowe.

To this point the book, if tasteless, remains at least credible. But here, to expedite the plot, the author begins to take liberties with

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even the realities of life. After the accident, Trevitt is neither arrested nor prosecuted; he isn't even questioned. He is injured, however, one side of his face torn open from temple to chin. In a fit, he tears at the cut: "Then I pushed it open, stretching the skin, digging in with my fingers until I could hear the skin as it split, farther and farther."

The author may believe this to be a fine little bit of agony, but, on the very next page (and four days later), he ignores the consequences of the scene and Trevitt, his face apparently miraculously healed, enlists in the army.

Once in the army, the author manages to get Trevitt out under much the same circumstances. Witness to a soldier's suicide by hand grenade, Trevitt picks up a piece of shrapnel in the knee. He is delirious three days, on the fourth is questioned by the provost marshal, whose questions he refuses to answer, and nineteen days later receives a medical discharge.

This tests one's credulity.

Out of the hospital, Trevitt wanders aimlessly until, in what we are supposed to believe is a charitable mood, he marries a prostitute. She, within a few pages, is sleeping with the teenager next door, and Trevitt, surprised and shocked, is having fits again.

Although the publishers, in the words of the dust jacket blurb, believe this novel to be "delightful," a "highly amusing tale," and one that tells of the "joys of first love" (a staggering appraisal!), it is not comedy. If the events recorded here are ever laughing matters, it escapes me where this would be. This novel's kind of willful sex may be taken in other places as sporting, sad, or sinful, but here the author never gets beyond the notion that it is fun.

Nor is this tragedy, even with its violent deaths and near derangements. For Trevitt is no tragic figure. The best that can be said is that he is unheroic. But this implies some quietude. Trevitt is loud, irreverent, insincere, lewd, but lewd perhaps without knowing he is lewd, for he is, above all, amoral.

Despite the excesses of the plot, however, and the crudeness of the story's telling, there is the underlying feeling that the author really meant to present a serious story, serious in that he was trying to say something about the adolescent's search for himself. But a search must be more than a physical rampage through society. It is Trevitt's, and the author's, failure that here there is no reflection, no intellectual involvement, that, stripped of its physical elements, the novel has no story at all, no character, nothing actually to hold our attention.

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